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ABSTRACT

This report examines data, on English language arts courses, generated by the Illinois Census of Secondary School Course Offerings and Enrollments conducted in 1981-82. Data from the 1976-77 course census are also presented to illustrate stability or shifts in course offerings and enrollments. The first half of the document discusses the summary highlights; the English language arts course offerings; the English course offerings and related characteristics; changes and patterns in the English curriculum; goals, policies, findings, and implications; reading and writing; remedial reading and remedial English; gifted education; arts in education; and regulatory problems. The second half of the report contains data concerning the classification of schools studied, as well as the enrollments, length, number, and kinds of English classes offered. Tables of findings accompany the text. (EL)

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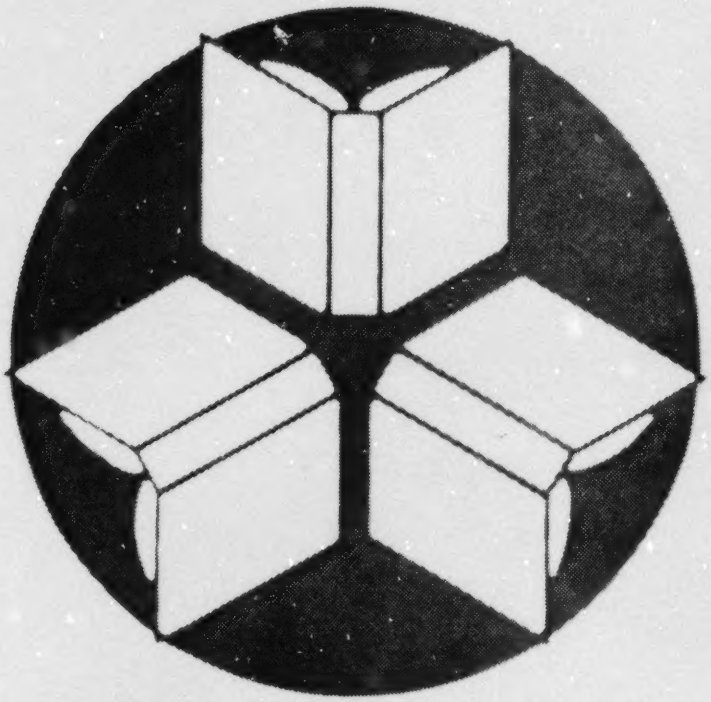


Special Report on ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CS209162

ILLINOIS SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS, 1982

Special Report on English Language Arts

July, 1984

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

WALTER W. NAUMER, Jr.
CHAIRMAN

DONALD G. GILL
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

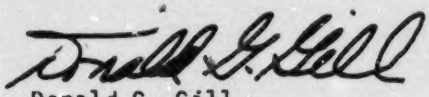
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
RESEARCH AND STATISTICS SECTION

FOREWORD

In 1977 the Illinois State Board of Education in cooperation with the Illinois Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development conducted a Census of Secondary School Course Offerings. This was the first statewide census of basic curriculum data in Illinois. The Census was designed to produce normative data relative to offerings and enrollments in Illinois public secondary schools and establish a source of information on secondary school curriculum. A second Census was conducted in 1982 to update the original database.

The Census project was directed by Dr. William L. Humm, Research and Statistics Section, Illinois State Board of Education. This special report on English Language Arts was written by Dr. Lawrence D. Freeman, College of Education, Governor's State University and edited by Dr. Humm. It is based on statistics from the Census project databases for 1977 and 1982.

Observations and conclusions in this report are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the policies or views of the Illinois State Board of Education or the State Superintendent of Education.



Donald G. Gill
State Superintendent of Education

SPECIAL REPORT ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Summary Highlights

As the size of high schools increases, the number of English courses offered increases, so that the likelihood that specific courses are required decreases.

Remedial English courses are offered by a higher proportion of central city high schools than by the smaller, less urban schools.

More than half of the high school English courses reported are a semester or less in length.

Grade specific courses for grades 9-12 account for about 45 percent of all enrollment in English courses. The substantial proportion of enrollments in these courses appears to be accounted for by requirements.

Courses in other major areas of English -- Writing, Reading, Literature, Speech Theatre, and Linguistics -- together account for one-third of all English enrollments.

Enrollments in the area of literature increased by 3 percent from 1977 to 1982 -- apparently substantially accounted for by increases in English and World Literature.

Fewer high schools offered a basic speech course in 1982 than in 1977 (55% in 1982 vs. 64% in 1977), but the proportion of English enrollments accounted for by this course remained the same, 3.4 percent.

English continues to account for 17 percent of the enrollment in all courses in Illinois high schools.

The proportion of females tends to exceed that of males in literature courses and advanced English courses.

ILLINOIS SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS, 1982
SPECIAL REPORT ON ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS

This report examines data generated by the Illinois Census of Secondary School Course Offerings and Enrollments conducted in 1981-82 by the Research and Statistics Section of the Illinois State Board of Education. Data from a previous course census for the year 1976-77 are presented to illustrate stability or shifts in course offerings and enrollments. This report focuses specifically on data regarding "English/Language Arts" courses.

English Language Arts Course Offerings

As used in this report, "English" or "English/Language Arts" refers to the group of courses reported by respondents under the heading "English/Language Arts." Courses were not assigned to this category on the basis of an *a priori* conception of English. There was no effort to define English and then assign only those courses meeting stated criteria to "English." Rather the courses considered in this report are those coming under the jurisdiction of departments or groups of faculty known as the "English" department or faculty. The notion of English that organizes the data considered in this report is sociological rather than philosophical.

These general observations arise from consideration of a number of facts. The number of English course titles reported is approximately 300. In general, these courses can be divided into the following kinds: grade specific, e.g., English Grade 10; literature; reading and writing; and speech and theatre courses. But even these divisions do not capture the diversity of the courses reported. Examples of courses that do not clearly fall into these areas are courses such as "Human Relations," "Exploring the Unknown," "Job Survival," "Personal Values," and "Youth Versus Establishment." While the percentage of such courses is not high and the enrollments in them are insignificant statewide, they do illustrate the extensive range of knowledge and skills embraced by the term "English" as used in public schools. Moreover, some courses appearing to fall within the purview of "English," as commonly used, are not included among English courses considered in this report. Some, but not all, Business English courses are reported under Business, and over three hundred high schools report English courses under the heading of Special Education.

Throughout this report, reference is made to various kinds of English courses, e.g., Remedial Reading and American Literature. These labels are used to permit analysis of the data, but even a term such as "American Literature" may mask considerable diversity. Examples of course titles aggregated under this general category are "American Civilization and Communication," "American Classics," "American Writers," "Early American Literature," "Recent American Literature," and "Themes in American Literature." Even after establishing over fifty course categories, it was necessary to assign over 150 courses to a category called, "Other English." In assigning some courses to one of these categories considerable judgment had to be exercised. It is assumed for purposes of this report, however, that even if all questionable judgments were erroneous, the number of courses involved is not sufficient to distort the general character of the data.

The diversity of English courses offered in Illinois secondary schools may have its source in Illinois' tradition of local control of curriculum. Neither the Illinois School Code nor regulations promulgated by the Illinois State Board of Education establish specific definitions of, nor offer guidance regarding, what constitutes English or Language Arts. For instance, the terminology used in State Board of Education regulations includes only general terms such as "Language Arts," "Reading" and "Communication Skills." These regulations, therefore, permit considerable discretion in developing English curricula at the local level. The available data suggest that local districts have exercised this discretion. The pluralistic conception of "English" as it emerges from statewide data regarding course offerings does, however, distort the reality of English curricula in specific Illinois high schools. The data suggest that much of the diversity can be accounted for, not by competing conceptions of what constitutes English/Language Arts, but by differences in school size, the composition of student bodies, and communities in which schools are located, particularly at the high school level. For instance, the typical Illinois high school with enrollment below five hundred offers between six and seven English courses; a typical high school with enrollment over a thousand offers between sixteen and nineteen courses (Table 1). Moreover, when an English course is offered, the likelihood that it is required generally increases as school size decreases. Among high schools with enrollments between 500 and 999 students about 26% of all English courses are required, while among high schools with enrollments between 1700 and 2599, the percentage is about 13% (Table 2).

The same generalization holds for junior high schools when the smallest and largest are compared. In those junior high schools with fewer than 200 students, 90% of all English courses are required; among those with enrollments over 1000, only about 50% are required (Table 3). The character of English course offerings and the amount of student choice among courses allowed, then, appears to be strongly influenced by size. However, since there is a strong correlation between school size and the kinds of communities in which schools of various sizes are located, it is impossible to determine accurately the relative impact of size, student body composition, and community expectations.

English Course Offerings and Related Characteristics

The difficulty in assessing the relative impact of each of these factors can be illustrated by the high school courses labelled "Remedial English." Statewide, about 32% of the high schools report Remedial English courses. These schools collectively account for about 48%, or roughly half, of all students attending high school in Illinois. The percentage of schools offering these courses increases markedly as school size increases, from less than 20% of those schools with fewer than 500 students to 60% of those schools with enrollments between 1700 and 2600. When community location is examined, the data reveal that about 75% of central city high schools offer Remedial English, while the percentages for high schools located in suburbs, independent cities and rural areas are 36, 31, and 18, respectively. So far, these data suggest that community location rather than size accounts for offerings in Remedial English. This continues to be the case when data for central city high schools are examined. In these high schools offering

this course, over 15% of the students are enrolled in them. However, when suburban and rural high schools offering these courses are compared, the following results occur: Even though the percentage of suburban schools offering remedial courses is about twice that of rural schools, the percentage of students in these schools taking these courses is less in suburban than in rural schools (about 4% compared to 8%). No firm conclusion can be drawn regarding the impact of community expectations and student body composition on offering this course (Tables 4 and 5).

In addition to size, composition of student bodies, and communities, the extensive number and diversity of English courses is also created by the varying lengths of courses, particularly in high schools. More than half of the high school courses reported are a semester or less in length, with the highest percentage of such courses occurring in schools with enrollments between 500 and 2600 students (Table 6). Because of the considerable variation in length of courses, it is necessary to exercise caution in using the data to generalize about the character of English curricula in Illinois high schools. When enrollment data for specific courses are reported, however, these data have been converted to "year equivalent" enrollments. That is, if a course is a semester course and has a statewide enrollment of 3000, the "year equivalent" enrollment is reported at 1500.

The importance attached to English, perhaps dictated in part by state regulations, emerges when the data for junior high schools are inspected. Statewide almost all junior high schools offer English/Language Arts Grade 7 and Grade 8. These two courses accounted for about 63% of all enrollments in English courses in junior high schools in 1981-82; the percentage for these two courses in 1976-77 was about 65%. Remedial English and all reading courses accounted for an additional 22% of all enrollments in 1976-77 and 25% in 1982-83. Thus, the grade specific English courses, remedial and reading courses accounted for 87% and 88% of all junior high school English enrollments in 1976-1977 and 1982-83, respectively. It appears then that the typical junior high school English curriculum is comprised of grade specific courses supplemented with remedial and reading courses and has remained stable over the past five years. This pattern appears to hold true regardless of the size of the junior high school (Table 7).

Enrollments in English/Language Arts Grades 7 and 8 can be accounted for in almost all cases by requirements. In 96% of the instances when these courses are offered, they are also required. In the case of general reading, the percentage is about 80%. Finally, only five courses--English Langage Arts for Grades 7 and 8, General Reading, Developmental Reading and Remedial Reading--are reported by 10% or more of the junior high schools (Table 8). The English Language Arts curriculum in Illinois junior high schools, then, appears not to provide much opportunity for student electives but to be shaped largely through requirements. Enrollment patterns in these courses, however, do differ by sex. A slightly higher percentage of male than female students are enrolled in remedial reading courses regardless of school location (Table 9). In general, a smaller percentage of males than females were enrolled in Grades 7 and 8 and general reading courses.

Changes and Patterns in the English Curriculum

As Table 11 illustrates, there has been relatively little change in the English curriculum in the past five years, as measured by the percentage of schools reporting the most frequently offered courses. To the extent these data permit generalizations, Illinois junior high schools at the seventh and eighth grade levels appear to be increasing reliance on grade specific courses and general reading courses.

While the English curriculum in Illinois junior high schools appears to be fairly standardized in terms of courses offered, courses required, and enrollments in them, the high school English curricula exhibit more diversity. Grade specific courses for grades 9-12 account for about 45% of all enrollments in English courses. This substantial percentage of enrollments in these four courses appears to be accounted for by requirements, particularly for grades 9, 10, and 11 as is illustrated in Table 11.

Courses in all other major areas of English curriculum--Writing, Reading, Literature, Speech, Theatre, and Linguistics--together account for an additional one third of all English enrollments, about 3% more than these areas accounted for in 1976-77. In 1981-82, these courses, together with grade specific courses, accounted for approximately 88% of all English course enrollments. As Table 12 shows, enrollments in these various courses have remained virtually stable, except in the area of literature which has increased by three percent in the past five years. This change appears to be accounted for by substantially more enrollments in courses labeled English and World Literature. In 1976-77, these courses accounted for only two percent of these enrollments; in 1981-82, they accounted for 6% of all English enrollments. This increase may be due to an approximate 7% decrease in the number of schools offering English Grade 12, and a decrease in the percentage of enrollments accounted for by Grade 12 English courses, a decrease of about 3% (Table 12.)

The data regarding Grades 11 and 12, arranged by school size, indicate that these courses are offered by 60% or more of schools with the smallest and largest enrollments. The largest schools, however, are among the least likely, and the smallest schools the most likely, to require these courses. At the same time, the percentage of English enrollments accounted for by English Grade 12 in the smallest schools is only 1% greater than in the largest schools. Statewide English Grade 12 accounts for about 3% of all English enrollments. Among schools of varying sizes, however, English 11 and 12 account for one-fourth of English course enrollments in schools under 200 and less than 10% of these enrollments in schools with between 1000 and 2600 students. This difference may be accounted for by the larger number of literature courses offered by schools with 1000-2600 students (Table 13). Between 1976-77 and 1981-82, there has been no decline in the percentage of English enrollments accounted for by English Grade 11; only a 1% decrease in this percentage for English Grade 12, even though 7% fewer high schools offer this course; and no change in this percentage for American Literature although 8% fewer schools offer it. The most significant shift has occurred in both the percentage of schools offering and the percentage of enrollments accounted for by English and World Literature (Table 14).

Significant change has also occurred in the area of speech. In 1976-77, 64% of all high schools offered a basic speech course; in 1981-82 only 55% did so. At the same time, the percentage of English enrollments accounted for by this course has remained virtually the same, 3.4%. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of schools offering, and of English enrollments accounted for, by courses labelled "Communication Skills." In 1976-77, about 8% of the high schools offered such a course and it accounted for less than 1% of all English enrollments. In 1981-82, twice as many schools (112) offered the course, and it accounted for almost 2% of all English enrollments (Table 15). Seventy, or 63%, of these schools are over 1000 in enrollment. Analysis of available data indicates that this course accounts for the highest percentage of English enrollments in central city schools and the least percentage of enrollments in independent cities, 2.7 and 1.0 percent respectively. If Communication Skills is viewed as a "speech" course, the percentage of course enrollments accounted for by all speech courses has increased from about 4.5% in 1976-77 to 5.6% in 1981-82. The following changes in percentage of enrollments accounted for by various groups of other courses have occurred between 1976-77 and 1981-82: Writing, an increase of 1%; Reading, a decrease of 1%; and Theatre, no change (Table 12).

In general, the English curriculum in Illinois high schools has remained essentially stable between 1976-77 and 1981-82. Economic pressures may have reduced the percentage of schools offering some courses, but enrollment patterns reveal little change in the major areas of the English curriculum. However, between 1976-77 and 1981-82 there has been a decrease in the number of English enrollments as a percentage of total school enrollment. In 1976-77 this percentage was about 94%; in 1981-82, this percentage was about 89%, a decrease of about 5%. At the same time, the percentage of all course enrollments accounted for by English has remained virtually stable at about 17%.

Enrollment patterns of males and females in courses offered by 10% or more of Illinois high schools indicate that in only eight of these twenty-seven cases do the percentages of males and females differ by more than one percent. The percentage of males enrolled in remedial courses exceeds that of females in every case by one and a half to over three percent. The percentage of females tends to exceed that for males in literature courses and advanced English courses (Table 16). These enrollment patterns suggest that females are more interested in English and perhaps display higher verbal aptitude and performance than do males.

Goals, Policies, Findings, and Implications

The course census assists in illuminating efforts of public secondary schools to carry out policies and to realize goals established by the State Board of Education, particularly in the areas of reading and literacy, remedial education, gifted education, and arts in education. In addition, this report uses the data to offer observations on regulatory problems that have been intensely examined in the past five years. Because the Census provides only course titles and no substantive description of the courses, no definitive conclusions can be drawn. General indication of schools' efforts in these areas can, however, be drawn from the data.

Reading and Writing

The State Board of Education has adopted a goal that exhorts "every school system. . .[to] assure its community that students are prepared to leave the schools with the ability to read and communicate effectively." Reading courses, as a distinct set of courses, appear more frequently in junior high schools than in high schools, whereas remedial reading courses appear more frequently in high schools. The area of remedial courses is discussed below. At this point, it can be observed that, even though junior high schools frequently offer and require reading courses, a substantial percentage of high school students, particularly males, apparently have not achieved a level of reading skills regarded as adequate.

The goal of the State Board also refers to communication skills, presumably skill in communicating both orally and in writing. Any attempt to assess the efforts of secondary schools in these areas is difficult because of the reliance on grade specific courses. The data do not permit any description of the content of these courses, including the extent to which writing and oral use of English are included in them. The data do indicate that in 1981-82 slightly more than one-third of the high schools offered a course in writing or composition, and about one-fourth offered an advanced writing or creative writing course. When a course designated as "writing or composition" is offered, it is required about 30% of the time. Unless the grade specific courses place considerable emphasis on writing, the data suggest that Illinois high schools have not acted decisively to ensure that their students achieve proficiency in writing, at least through offering and requiring courses. In fact, between 1976-77 and 1981-82, there was a decline in the number of schools offering basic writing or advanced writing courses, though there was an increase in the percentage of schools offering creative writing. There has been, however, a slight increase in the percentage (about one-half point) of English enrollments accounted for by basic composition courses. As noted in the discussion of the data regarding "speech" courses above, the percentage of schools offering a basic speech course has declined in the past five years, but the percentage of English enrollments accounted for by such a course has remained stable. In addition, courses in "communication skills" are offered more frequently and account for a larger percentage of enrollments in 1981-82 than in 1976-77 (Table 15). When all of these data are considered, however, over one-half of Illinois students attend high schools that do not offer a basic writing course, and about one-third attend schools that do not offer a public speaking course.

Remedial Reading and Remedial English

The State Board of Education in its policy on remedial education acknowledges that while every person at the same age level should not be expected to demonstrate the same level of competency, the school system should help each person develop to the same level of competency as rapidly as possible. The Board calls for early identification of problems in skill development and programs to correct these problems.

The data available from the course census do not permit unqualified assertions about secondary school remedial efforts in areas relevant to English. Some courses are clearly identified as "remedial"; others with different titles may or may not be intended to provide remedial assistance. For instance, it is unclear whether "developmental" and "individualized" reading courses are remedial in character. Moreover, it is not clear whether some courses such as "English Fundamentals" and "Grammar" are remedial in character. Finally, a clear distinction cannot be drawn between students served in remedial English courses and those served in English and reading courses reported under Special Education.

For purposes of this discussion, the following courses are regarded as being uniformly remedial in intent and character: Remedial Reading, Individualized Reading, Remedial English and G. S. Communications/ Remedial. Among Illinois junior high schools, about 30% offer remedial and individualized reading and roughly 10% offer remedial English and G. S. Communications/Remedial. About two-thirds of all students enrolled in junior high schools attend schools that do not offer remedial or individualized reading. A slightly higher percentage of high schools, accounting for over one-half of high school enrollments, offer these courses. When remedial reading courses are offered by junior high schools, over 10% of their students are enrolled in them, compared to 6% of the students in senior high schools offering them. One would expect, under the Board's policy, that offerings in remedial reading would be greater in junior high schools than in high schools. However, data indicate this is not the case.

There is no marked pattern in the frequency of junior high schools offering these courses when arranged by type of community. Between 27% and 33% of central city, suburban, and independent city junior high schools do so. The percentage of the schools' enrollment taking remedial reading courses ranges from 7% in central city junior high schools to 17% in independent city schools. These data suggest that when remedial reading courses are offered in junior high schools, a substantial portion of the students are judged to need remedial assistance in reading. Further, these data suggest that many junior high schools may not be addressing the need of Illinois students for remediation, unless they are doing so under courses not labelled remedial or through remedial instruction in grade specific courses.

Remedial English courses appear at the high school level more frequently than at the junior high level. Only about 10% of the junior high schools offer such courses, while about 30% of the high schools offer Remedial English and about 10% offer "G. S. Communications/Remedial." Again, the task of remediating deficiencies appears to be avoided by junior high schools and to be assumed by high schools. At the same time, even at the high school level, about 30% of all Illinois high school students attend high schools that do not offer remedial work in English or communication.

Between 1976-77 and 1981-82, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of junior high schools offering remedial reading (33% to less than 30%) and an increase in the percentage offering remedial English (8% to 9%). There has been, however, a significant increase in the percentage of the schools' enrollment in remedial and individualized reading when it is offered (11% in 1976-77 and about 17% in 1981-82) and an increase from about 9% in 1976-77 to about 13% in 1981-82 of the schools' enrollments in remedial English and communications. The percentage of high schools offering remedial English and communications in 1976-77 and 1981-82 is virtually identical. The percentage of school enrollment in Remedial English has decreased from almost 10% to about 8%, and the same statistic for G. S. Communication has dropped precipitiously from about 19% to about 9% (Table 17).

Gifted Education

In its policies, the State Board of Education has encouraged public schools to develop programs for students gifted and talented in general intellectual ability or in some specific area. Because schools have responded to this goal in diverse ways, the census data do not permit development of a clear picture of how secondary schools use English courses to assist students gifted in the verbal arts. It is possible, however, to analyze data regarding courses labelled "honors" or "advanced" and presumably reserved for students displaying significant aptitude in English. For instance, in 1980-81, about 28 high schools, or 6%, offered courses in advanced English compared with 10 or about 2% in 1976-77. A substantially higher percentage of high schools, about 40%, offers some course that might be regarded as "advanced." This percentage remained virtually stable between 1976-77 and 1981-82; the schools offering these courses account for about 62% of all high school enrollments. Since over one-third of Illinois students attend high schools that do not offer such courses, it can be estimated that about 22,000 students who could profit from such instruction do not have the opportunity to do so. Moreover, the percentage of English enrollments accounted for by these courses has decreased from about five to four percent between 1976-77 and 1981-82 (Table 18).

Arts in Education

In a policy regarding arts in education, the State Board of Education has noted that an appreciation of the arts contributes to the quality of individual and societal life but that "Illinois schools have an expressed need for maintaining quality programs in the present era of declining human and material resources." Two areas of English--literature and theatre--appear to be relevant to this Board action.

In addition to grade specific courses which conventionally include the study of literature, high schools in Illinois continue to offer a substantial number of literature courses. These literature courses accounted for about 11% of year-equivalent enrollments in English in 1976-77 and about 14% in 1981-82. Theatre courses, however, account for only about 1% of all English enrollments at the junior high school level and about 2% at the high school level. About one-fourth of Illinois high schools enrolling about 40% of the students offer courses in Theatre. Thus about 60% of all Illinois high school students do not have access to Theatre courses; available enrollment data suggest that about 12,000 students would enroll in these courses if they were available.

Regulatory Problems

Between 1976-77 and 1981-82, the data regarding English Language Arts courses, and by inference, the character of the English curriculum in Illinois junior and senior high schools have remained virtually stable. As noted earlier, the diversity of courses offered under the heading of English is extensive, in part because "English," as typically used in public schools embraces a number of curricular areas--reading, writing, oral communication, literature, language and theatre. The diversity of course offerings in these and other areas appears, as suggested above, to have as one of its sources the Illinois tradition of local control of the curriculum. At the high school level, there appears to be continued reliance on an elective system for fulfilling graduation requirements, particularly in larger high schools.

The current English curriculum has evolved under a set of state regulations, stipulating that a four year high school must offer and require three years in "language arts" and a three year high school must offer and require two years. The regulations mandate that the "emphasis shall be on reading and writing skills, while one-half unit may be oral communication."

It is unclear whether the newly established graduation requirements for high school graduation enacted by the General Assembly will be interpreted in the same way. These requirements mandate three years of Language Arts and provide no further specifications. However these requirements are interpreted, the diversity of courses offered under English appears to defy intelligent regulation. First, it is unclear whether theatre courses fall within either set of requirements. Second, there are a number of courses that appear only marginally to belong to English as typically understood--"Advertising," "Conflict," "Coping," "Creativity," "Decision-making," "Film," "Film Study," "Human Relations," "Introduction to Yearbook," "Library and Media Practices," "Peer Counseling and Tutoring," "Photo-Journalism," "Radio, T.V., and Film." Third, it is unclear whether courses that are vocationally oriented, e.g., Business English and Practical or Occupational English, meet these requirements.

It would appear that both the State Board of Education regulations and the new law establishing high school graduation requirements are intended to ensure that high school graduates have acquired skills and knowledge in reading and writing, though the character and level of these skills and knowledge are unspecified. The data available from the course census does not enable even a cursory review of whether the present array of courses and requirements assures the desired outcomes. The data suggest that of the 681 schools that have ninth grades, about 93% of them rely on a grade specific course to provide instruction, that if tradition holds, focus primarily on writing skills. It is unclear what course format the remainder uses for ninth graders. As many as 11% of all high schools appear to rely on some set of courses rather than a grade specific course to organize English instruction for sophomores. And at the junior level, only 55% of the high

schools offer a grade specific course. Thus, at the ninth grade level, 7%, at the tenth grade level, 11%, and at the eleventh grade level, 45% of the schools rely on some course organization other than grade specific courses to provide instruction aimed at fulfilling state requirements. It is unclear what these courses are. These data suggest, given the diversity of English courses, a need to clarify the kind of content and focus courses must have to meet state level requirements. It appears that reliance on local discretion may result in a distortion of what constitutes English/Language Arts, at least to the extent that state interest is involved. Clarification about whether remedial English, remedial reading, remedial communications and vocationally-oriented courses meet implicit state criteria is necessary. The same sort of attention needs to be given to those courses labelled journalism, mass communication, and radio/television/and film. Collectively these courses account for 12% of all English enrollments and may, it appears, be used for meeting state requirements.

The responsibility of schools in addressing the need to develop writing and reading skills is explicit in State Board of Education requirements. The schools' responsibility in the area of oral skills is more ambiguous. The new law on high school graduation requirements is silent on this matter. State Board of Education requirements are permissive, allowing up to one semester of speech or oral communication to count toward graduation. There is, then, no clear state level requirement in the area of oral communications. The absence of a clear requirement results in a situation in which 30% of the high schools do not offer a specifically titled course in this area.

The current effort of the State Board of Education to identify instructional outcomes in several curricular areas should assist in providing some of the clarity now lacking in state requirements. At the same time, this effort is also likely to result in a clearer conception of the curricular area known as English/Language Arts, which, even if not improved through regulatory mechanisms, may influence local schools to review the conceptual framework governing English curricula in high schools. One effect of this effort may be to curtail reliance on the elective system apparently used by many schools, though such an effect is not clearly predictable. A more likely constraint on the continuation of the elective system is continued reduction in high school enrollments in the next few years, although the 11% decrease in enrollments among schools reporting in 1976-77 and 1981-82 has not noticeably reduced the electives for most students. The effect is more likely to become noticeable should school sizes decrease. As Table 1 illustrates, the median number of English courses offered by high schools of varying sizes indicates an increase only for schools between 1700 and 2599 students, and a reduction of two courses among schools below 500 students and schools between 1000 and 1700 students. In percentage terms, the decrease in the median number of English courses for schools below 500 students approximates 25%.

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DEMOGRAPHICS AND DATA TABLES

The Schools in the Census

Census data were collected from 489 public junior high schools and 719 public high schools. The participating schools represent 82 percent of the junior high schools and 99 percent of the high schools in the defined population of the Census.

Schools were classified by grade level composition, by school size, and by community type. Schools classified as junior high schools were typically two-year, grade 7-8 schools (92 percent). Another 6 percent were three-year, grade 7-9 schools. High schools included four-year, grade 9-12 schools (88 percent); three-year, grade 10-12 schools (3 percent); and junior-senior high schools including grades 7-12 (6 percent).

There is a direct relationship between school size and community type, with larger schools located in central cities and smaller schools in rural areas. This relationship is particularly strong for high schools, as indicated in Table D-1. Most of the rural high schools (99 percent) had under 1000 students, even when six-year (7-12) schools were included. On the other hand, 61 percent of the urban schools had enrollments over 1000. Table D-2 shows the range and quartile data for high schools in the Census.

TABLE D-1. ILLINOIS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS BY SIZE AND COMMUNITY TYPE, 1981-82.

Size	Central City	Suburb	Independent City	Rural	All	%
	Community Type					
1-199	4	3	1	181	189	26.3
200-499	1	19	44	130	194	27.0
500-999	10	28	36	28	102	14.2
1000-1699	38	57	17	2	114	15.9
1700-2599	36	61	1	0	98	13.6
2600 +	6	15	0	1	22	3.1
	88%	88%	98%	99%		
ALL	95	183	99	342	719	
%	13.2	25.5	13.8	47.6		

TABLE D-2. ENROLLMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS, 1981-82

Mean	Smallest	10th Percent	25th Percent	MEDIAN	75th Percent	90th Percent	Largest
826	33	119	191	452	1350	2100	4614

Table D-3 presents data by school size and community type for junior high schools. Junior high schools generally enrolled over 500 students (93 percent) in central cities, between 200 and 1000 in suburbs (93 percent) and independent cities (80 percent), and under 500 (97 percent) in rural areas. Table D-4 gives the range and quartile data for junior high schools in the Census.

TABLE D-3. ILLINOIS PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS BY SIZE AND COMMUNITY TYPE, 1981-82

Size	Community Type: Central City		Suburb		Independent City		Rural		All	%
1-199		0		13		15		102	130	26.6
200-499		2		103		48	97%	39	192	39.3
500-999		22	93%	115	80%	17		5	159	32.5
1000 +	93%	4		3		1		0	8	1.6
ALL		28		234		81		146	489	
%		5.7		47.9		16.6		29.9		

TABLE D-4. ENROLLMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS, 1976-77

Mean	Smallest	10th Percent	25th Percent	MEDIAN	75th Percent	90th Percent	Largest
403	40	94	180	370	592	757	1198

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TABLE 1
NUMBER OF ENGLISH COURSES OFFERED BY ILLINOIS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, BY SIZE

	Low	High	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
1- 199	0 (0)*	25 (26)	5 (5)	6 (8)	8 (10)
200- 499	3 (2)	32 (31)	6 (7)	7 (9)	11 (11)
500- 999	2 (2)	27 (30)	8 (9)	12 (12)	14 (15)
1000-1699	2 (2)	56 (39)	12 (11)	17 (15)	21 (21)
1700-2599	5 (5)	42 (36)	13 (13)	16 (17)	21 (21)
2600+	10 (10)	29 (70)	14 (17)	19 (19)	22 (23)
All	0	56	6	9	15

*Numbers in parentheses are the figures for 1976-77.

TABLE 2
PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH COURSES REQUIRED IN ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS, BY SIZE

Size	Percent Required
1- 199	53
200- 499	39
500- 999	26
1000-1699	15
1700-2599	13
2600+	14

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH COURSES REQUIRED IN ILLINOIS JR. HIGH SCHOOLS, BY SIZE

Size	Percent Required
1- 199	90
200- 499	80
500- 999	64
1000+	51

TABLE 4
PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING REMEDIAL ENGLISH, BY SIZE

Size	Percentage Offering	Percentage of School Enrollment in Course
1- 199	16	9
200- 499	17	6
500- 999	35	9
1000-1699	49	11
1700-2599	61	11
2600+	55	7

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING REMEDIAL ENGLISH, BY COMMUNITY TYPE

Community Type	Percentage Offering	Percentage of School Enrollment
Central City	75	16
Suburb	36	4
Independent City	31	7
Rural	18	8

TABLE 6
PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH COURSES OF VARIOUS LENGTHS, BY SIZE

Length	All	1-199	200-499	500-999	1000-1699	1700-2599	2600+
Quarter or less	5	6	9	3	4	2	2
Semester	45	26	39	53	51	52	42
Year	48	67	51	43	37	46	56
Other	2	1	1	1	8	0	0

TABLE 7
PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLMENTS ACCOUNTED FOR BY SPECIFIC ENGLISH COURSES OFFERED BY JR. HIGH SCHOOLS, BY SIZE

	All	1-199	200-499	500-999	1000+
English Language Arts Grade 7	32 (33)*	32	31	31	32
English Language Arts Grade 8	31 (32)	32	31	30	31
Remedial English	1 (0)	0	0	1	2
Reading	24 (22)	23	24	24	18
Total	88 (87)	87	89	86	83

Figures in parentheses are for 1976-77.

TABLE 8
MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED ENGLISH COURSES IN JR. HIGH SCHOOLS, BY SIZE

A. Percentage of Schools Offering

	1-199	200-499	500-999	1000+	All
English Grade 7	99	97	92	100	96
English Grade 8	99	92	92	100	94
Reading, General	33	35	40	75	37
Developmental Read.	9	16	22	25	16
Remedial Reading	23	29	33	63	29

B. Percentage of Instances Course is Required When Offered

	1-199	200-499	500-999	1000+	All
English Grade 7	98	98	94	88	97
English Grade 8	98	97	93	88	96
Reading, General	94	84	73	38	80
Developmental Read.	71	70	58	--	63
Remedial Reading	31	33	30	33	32

TABLE 9
PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY SEX IN SELECTED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH COURSES, BY COMMUNITY TYPE

	Central City			Suburban			Indep. City			Rural		
	% Male	% Female	Diff.	% Male	% Female	Diff.	% Male	% Female	Diff.	% Male	% Female	Diff.
English Lang. Arts Gr. 7	37	38	+1F	45	47	+2F	46	48	+2F	48	50	+2F
English Lang. Arts Gr. 8	35	37	+2F	44	46	+2F	44	45	+1F	44	47	+3F
Reading, General	25	24	+1M	55	56	+1F	46	49	+3F	79	84	+5F
Reading Development	13	13	0	45	46	+1F	35	39	+4F	44	42	+2M
Remedial Reading	8	6	+2M	13	9	+4M	19	15	+4M	14	11	+3M

TABLE 10
MOST FREQUENTLY OFFERED COURSES IN JR. HIGH SCHOOL, 1976-77 and 1981-82

	Percentage of Jr. High Schools Offering		
	1976-77	1981-82	Change
English Grade 7	93	96	+3
English Grade 8	93	94	+1
English Grade 9	12	7	-5
Reading, General	29	37	+8
Developmental Reading	20	16	-4
Remedial Reading	33	29	-4
Public Speaking	11	9	-2

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE OF ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING AND REQUIRING GRADE SPECIFIC ENGLISH COURSES, BY SIZE

	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
	% Schools Offering	% of Instances Required	% Schools Offering	% of Instances Required	% Schools Offering	% of Instances Required	% Schools Offering	% of Instances Required
1- 199	95	96	89	94	76	91	60	16
200- 499	91	97	84	94	65	90	43	15
500- 999	89	85	82	87	49	90	33	26
1000-1699	75	62	74	57	31	69	19	14
1700-2599	87	53	78	47	32	74	16	78
2600+	90	70	86	63	59	50	59	23
All	89	83	83	87	55	86	39	17

TABLE 12
PERCENTAGES FOR SELECTED COURSES AND AREAS OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH

A. Percentage of High School Enrollments in Selected Areas of English, 1976-77 and 1981-82

	1976-77	1981-82	Change
Writing	5	6	+1
Reading	7	6	-1
Speech*	4	4	0
Theatre	2	2	0
Linguistics	1	1	0
Literature	11	14	+3
Total	30	33	+3

*Excludes "Communication Skills"; See Table 15 for this course

B. Percentage of Enrollments in Selected High School English Courses

	1976-77	1981-82	Change
English Grade 12	6	3	-3
English Literature	1	3	+2
American Literature	4	4	0
World Literature	1	3	+2

C. Percentage of High Schools Offering Selected Courses

	1976-77	1981-82	Change
English Grade 12	46	39	-7
American Literature	44	36	-8
English Literature	30	31	+1
World Literature	21	24	+3

TABLE 13
SELECTED ENGLISH COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOLS BY SIZE

A. Percentage of Schools Offering

	1-199	200-499	500-999	1000-1699	1700-2599	2600+	All
English Grade 11	76	65	49	31	32	60	55
American Literature	19	34	45	52	44	50	36
English Grade 12	60	43	33	50	64	60	39
English Literature	10	18	33	50	64	60	31
World Literature	7	14	19	46	48	68	24

B. Percentage of Instances of Course Required

English Grade 11	96	90	90	70	74	50	
American Literature	8	32	10	22	10	41	
English Grade 12	94	16	26	14	19	23	
English Literature	5	3	3	3	1	8	
World Literature	36	11	11	5	3	--	

C. Percentage of English Enrollments

English Grade 11	18	14	10	6	6	11	9
American Literature	2	3	4	4	3	6	4
English Grade 12	6	4	3	2	2	5	3
English Literature	1	1	2	4	4	4	3
World Literature	1	1	1	3	4	5	3

TABLE 14
SELECTED ENGLISH COURSES OFFERED BY HIGH SCHOOLS, 1976-77 AND 1981-82

A. Percentage of Schools Offerings

	1976-77	1981-82	Change
English Grade 11	57	55	-2
American Literature	44	36	-8
English Grade 12	46	39	-7
English Literature	30	31	+1
World Literature	21	24	+3

B. Percentage of English Enrollments

English Grade 11	9	9	0
American Literature	4	4	0
English Grade 12	4	3	-1
English Literature	1	3	+2
World Literature	1	3	+2
Total	18	22	+4

TABLE 15
BASIC SPEECH COURSES OFFERED IN ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS

A. Percentage of High Schools Offering

	1976-77	1981-82	Change
Speech & Public Speaking	64	55	-9
Communication Skills	8	16	+8

B. Percentage of English Enrollments Accounted for by Basic Speech Courses

	1976-77	1981-82	Change
Speech & Public Speaking	3.4	3.4	0
Communication Skills	1	2	+1

TABLE 16
PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE ENROLLMENT IN THE MOST FREQUENTLY OFFERED ENGLISH COURSES*

	Male	Female	Difference of 1% or More
English Grade 9	18.08	18.89	
English Grade 10	18.06	18.60	
English Grade 11	18.09	18.20	
English Grade 12	8.23	9.27	+1.04F
Remedial English	11.08	8.73	+2.35M
G.S. Communications/Remedial	9.97	8.50	+1.47M
English Honors	5.57	8.35	+3.18F
English, College Level	4.77	6.26	+1.49F
General Reading	4.22	3.79	
Remedial Reading	7.00	5.50	+1.50M
Grammar	5.26	5.45	
American Literature	7.44	8.04	
English Literature	5.37	6.36	
World Literature	6.14	6.56	
Contemporary Literature	2.56	3.08	
Short Stories	3.38	3.43	
Novel	1.93	2.56	
Composition	6.20	6.96	
Advanced Composition	4.10	4.91	
Creative Writing	1.19	1.91	
Journalism	1.68	2.78	+1.10F
Speech	4.84	5.10	
Communication Skills	6.93	6.59	
Mass Communication	3.42	2.85	
Radio/TV/Film	3.62	2.04	+1.58M
Theatre	1.51	2.46	
Theatre Production	1.43	1.56	

*Percentage is based on course enrollment compared to the enrollment of schools offering the course.

TABLE 17
PERCENTAGE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS OFFERING REMEDIAL COURSES

	Junior High Schools		High Schools	
	% Offered	% of School Enrollment	% Offered	% of School Enrollment
Remedial Reading	29 (33)*	12 (11)	28 (30)	6 (7)
Individualized Reading	1 (0)	5 (0)	6 (6)	3 (4)
Remedial English	9 (8)	7 (9)	32 (33)	10 (8)
G.S. Communications/ Remedial	1 (0)	6 (0)	11 (10)	9 (19)

Note: Figures in parentheses are for 1976-77.

TABLE 18
ADVANCED HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH COURSES

	% of Schools Offering	% of State H.S. Enrollment	% of Student Enrollment	% of English Enrollment
English Seminar	1 (2)	2 (3)	1 (2)	1 (1)*
Honors English	15 (10)	30 (22)	7 (16)	2 (4)
Independent Study	4 (6)	8 (11)	1 (1)	1 (1)*
College Level English	20 (22)	22 (28)	6 (4)	1 (1)
Total	40 (40)	62 (64)	15 (23)	3.7 (4.8)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are for 1976-77.

*Less than 1 percent both years.